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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Thursday, April 25, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TEA AS YOU LIKE IT." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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As a nation, we're drinking more tea than we used to. The last report on the subject issued by the Food and Drug Administration, which administers the Tea Act, indicates that the 1939 importations of tea were 2 million pounds more than those of the previous year. And one of the striking things about this increase in the amount of tea imported is that it is very good tea. It must all conform to the minimum standards set up by the U. S. Tea Board. And last year only one twentieth of one percent of all the tea offered for entry to this country had to be rejected as unfit.

That indicates great care on the part of shippers to forward tea of good quality. Out of the 43,000 pounds rejected, about half had been damaged on the way over here. It was not rejected because the tea was of inferior quality when it left India, China, Japan, or other tea-growing regions in Asia.

So when you go to the store to buy tea, you need not concern yourself with its purity, for the Tea Act takes care of that. Nor with its quality, except to get the quality you like. You probably have a preference among the three main types of tea, --black, green, or oolong. Under each type there are many teas, produced in different regions, and each kind of tea may be imported in several different qualities or grades above the minimum allowed by the tea standards.

We import more black teas than any other kind--over three-fourths of the total amount that reaches the United States. The bulk of the black tea comes from Ceylon, India, Java, and Sumatra, with appreciable amounts however from China and Japan. But the name of the country where the tea grew does not always tell you whether it

is black, green, or oolong tea. Any tea can be cured or finished as black tea, or fully fermented; green, or unfermented; or oolong, partly fermented. And there are also imported mixtures, which some people prefer.

The words "Pekoe" or "Orange Pekoe" on a tea do not mean a tea type or cup quality. They refer to the size of the leaf, and are terms used in grading. After tea is picked the leaves are separated into five leaf grades- Flowery Orange Pekoe, Orange Pekoe, Pekoe, Pekoe Souchong, and Souchong. Flowery Orange Pekoe tea is made up of the tender leaves from the tip of the plant. Souchong tea is made from the coarsest leaves. Any tea that reaches you over the counter must be good enough to satisfy the minimum tea standards, so you, as the customer have to decide for yourself which flavor or cup quality you prefer.

You may find that you like one kind of tea to serve hot with a meal, maybe with milk or cream and sugar; another for afternoon social functions, with lemon; and still another for making ice tea. If you have always bought the same kind and quality of teas, you might try a little experimenting with other types. Sample several kinds in good, medium, and fair quality. You may find that you have been missing some tea which appeals to your taste more than the one you use now.

This sampling of tea represents in a small way the procedure carried out on a much more thorough and extensive scale by the U. S. Board of Tea Examiners when they meet to set up tea standards each year. Under the U. S. Tea Act, a board of 7 tea experts meets every year in the first week of February, to select standard teas to be used in examining all the tea imported after May 1 of the same year. Last February this board selected 10 types of tea. All imported teas must be compared with these standards, according to their kind.

Would you like to know the names of the 10 types? They are: Formosa Oolong, Formosa Black, Congou,- or China Black- that's English Breakfast tea; Java, the term to be used for all fully fermented teas such as India, Ceylon, and Sumatra, but not

China, Japan, or Formosa black teas; Japan Black, Japan Green, Japan Dust, (a variety of green), Gunpowder- which is used for all China green teas,- Scented Canton, used for all scented teas, and Canton Oolong.

These standard samples are put up in half-pound tins, and complete sets of them are sent to each of the tea examiners of the Food and Drug Administration. These examiners are located at the ports to which tea is shipped- at New York, Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, and Honolulu. Any importer or shipper of tea can buy standard samples at cost from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to help him make sure his product meets government requirements.

And now perhaps you would like to know how the tea experts make a cup of tea. I'll quote from Charles F. Hutchinson, Chief Tea Examiner. He says: "For the average person allow a level teaspoon of tea leaves to the cup. The water must be boiling or the tea leaves won't open fully, and part of the strength and flavor will be lost. But never actually boil tea, and never let the water stay in contact with the leaves more than 5 or 6 minutes at most. Measure the tea leaves into an aluminum strainer, place it across the top of the teapot, and pour boiling water through the strainer until the pot is full. The body of the strainer will then be in the boiling water.

"After the tea has drawn 3 or 4 minutes, take the strainer out and you will have a cup of perfect tea."

To make good iced tea, Mr. Hutchinson says to make the hot tea in the same way, only a little extra strong. Take the tea leaves out, cool the infusion, and put it in the icebox to chill thoroughly. Add a small piece of ice at serving time if you wish, and lemon, but do not pour hot tea directly over the ice or you will dilute all the good flavor. Chilled tea for serving cold can only wait a few hours. Never try to save it overnight.

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